

Page 6, between lines 2 and 3, insert the following heading:

--Summary of the Invention--.

Page 6, delete lines 14 and 15.

Page 8, between lines 16 and 17, insert the following heading:

--Brief Description of the Drawings--.

Page 9, between lines 3 and 4, insert the following heading:

--Detailed Description--.

Add the following Abstract:

--A method for conducting transactions between a smart card and a terminal which includes an authentication session by the card. A control counter is decremented, or incremented, by one unit at the start of the transaction and subsequently re-incremented, or decremented, only if the authentication by the card is successful. When the counter reaches a threshold value, the use of the card is blocked, thereby preventing fraudulent use of the card in an attempt to discover the encryption keys contained in the card.--